

Message Text

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21

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MARR, MILI, TH

SUBJ: NATION ARTICLE QUOTE U.S. WANTS TO KEEP UTAPAO

UNQUOTE

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF FRONT PAGE STORY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER THE NATION, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10. BEGIN TEXT THE UNITED STATES HAS SOUGHT THAILAND'S APPROVAL FOR MAKING THE SPRAWLING U-TAPAO BASE AVAILABLE FOR CONTINGENCY USE AFTER THE QUOTE TOTAL WITHDRAWAL UNQUOTE OF AMERICAN TROOPS BY MARCH 20, NEXT YEAR.

THE UNOFFICIAL REQUEST, SHORT OF A RE-ENTRY AGREEMENT EARLIER PUT FORWARD BY US EMBASSY HERE, IS EXPECTED TO BE A MAJOR ITEM OF DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN FOREIGN MINISTER CHATICHAI CHOONHAVAN AND US SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY KISSINGER IN WASHINGTON LATER THIS MONTH.

THE THAI GOVERNMENT IS REPORTEDLY DISCUSSING CERTAIN QUOTE CONDITIONS UNQUOTE TO BE IMPOSED ON THE US SHOULD THE REQUEST TO KEEP U-TAPAO AVAILABLE FOR US EMERGENCY USE BE GRANTED.

THE AMERICAN REQUEST INDICATED THAT A RESIDUAL FORCE OF QUOTE TECHNICIANS UNQUOTE WILL BE LEFT BEHIND TO MAINTAIN THE COMPLEX OF MILITARY FACILITIES IN U-TAPAO BASE, HOME OF B-52 GIANT BOMBERS.

THE RESIDUAL FORCE TO BE LEFT BEHIND AT U-TAPAO
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WILL THEORETICALLY BE A QUOTE CIVILIAN TASK FORCE

UNQUOTE SINCE OFFICIALLY NO AMERICAN MILITARY TROOPS
WILL BE ALLOWED HERE AFTER THE QUOTE TOTAL PULLOUT
DEADLINE. UNQUOTE.

THE REVIEW OF THAI-AMERICAN MILITARY TREATIES BY
THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY THE CABINET HAS
NOT BEEN COMPLETED.

ACCORDING TO INFORMED SOURCES, THE TOP MILITARY
AUTHORITIES WILL BE CONSULTED OVER DETAILS OF POSSIBLE
CHANGES IN THE TREATIES BEFORE GEN. CHATICHAI TAKES
THE MATTER UP WITH MR. KISSINGER.

THE REVIEW OF THE THAI-AMERICAN TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC
COOPERATION AGREEMENT HAS BEEN COMPLETED WITH THE RESULT
THAT THAILAND WILL PROPOSE TO ABOLISH ALL
COUNTERPART FUNDS TO MATCH AMERICAN ASSISTANCE.

THE QUOTE COLOMBO UNQUOTE TYPE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE -
IN THE FORM OF GRANTS - WILL CONTINUE, THE SOURCE
SAID. END TEXT.

2. COMMENT: THOUGH NO ATTRIBUTION GIVEN, APPARENTLY REPORT
CAME FROM SOURCE IN FOREIGN MINISTRY. STORY MAY
BE TRIAL BALLOON REPRESENTING MFA ATTEMPT TO TEST
PUBLIC REACTION TO POSSIBILITY OF RESIDUAL U.S. PRE-
SENCE AT UTAPAO. THE NATION IS OFTEN USED BY MFA
FOR THIS PURPOSE.

3. IF ASKED ABOUT STORY, U.S. SPOKESMAN WILL REPLY
AS FOLLOWS: QUOTE AS WE HAVE SAID MANY TIMES, THERE
ARE CONTINUING CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN THAI AND U.S.
OFFICIALS CONCERNING THE LEVEL OF THE U.S.
MILITARY PRESENCE. AS DECISIONS ARE REACHED THROUGH
THOSE CONSULTATIONS, THEY ARE PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED.
THAT REPORT (IN THE NATION) IS PURELY SPECULATIVE.
UNQUOTE.
WHITEHOUSE

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